the Capitol Hill Monitor

THE Washington Area Scanner Club

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SCANNERS MAKE COMMUTING EASIER

By Alan Henney

Friday is nearly everyone's favorite day, and the Friday before Memorial Day is no exception. The Memorial Day Weekend traditionally marks the start of the summer season - bringing with it longer days, trips to the beach, and larger than usual back-ups on the highways. While many of us head to the beach, area traffic reporters take to the sky.

Scanner listeners not only find information provided by traffic reporters useful, but also entertaining. Witty comments from reporters, like Andy Parks, make listening to traffic aircraft a popular past time for many local scanner buffs - even while at home. Before you head out on the road, don't forget to keep some of the following frequencies in mind.

Few radio frequencies change faster than those in use by traffic reporters. Earlier this year WTOP grounded long-time airborne traffic reporter Bob Marbourg in favor of a contracted service provided by Metro Traffic Control. Marbourg's reports now exclusively originate from the ground and supplement those coming from John Hedler who reports from a Metro Traffic airplane.

Walt Starling, possibly the best known Washington traffic reporter, remains the only non-Metro Traffic affiliated airborne reporter in the city. As a result of increased demand for Metro Traffic reports, Metro's 450.9125 MHz repeater now buzzes with activity even after and in-between rush hours.

Now let's take a look at the traffic frequencies active in the Washington and Baltimore areas.

WASHINGTON

Metro Traffic Control - Washington Bureau

450.2375s Air 6 to MTC Studio Remotes (rarely used)
450.9125ro Two-Way & Occasional Remotes
455.9250ri input to 450.9125 (KPE936)

Reporters on Metro's 450.9125 MHz repeater

unit	radio station	traffic reporter
2	WMAL	Andy Parks
4	WMZQ	Jim Russ (Air Watch 1)
5		Greg Gregory
6	WPGC	Tom Fanning
7	WMZQ	Mark Megicine (Air Watch 2)
8	WTOP	John Hedler
11		Steve Eldridge
15	WTOP	Bob Marbourg
17	WUSA	Greg Guise

From what I hear, the Metro Traffic trunked system, which operated on 861 through 865 MHz (on increments .4875 and .6875) was phased out for the 450.9125 MHz repeater. The license for the trunked system (KA89879), however, still exists. Metro Traffic Control provides airborne traffic reporters for WMAL, WMZQ, WPGC and WTOP - see these listings below for additional details.

As Metro Traffic continues to carve out a larger and larger niche of the Washington market, activity once found on 122.75 MHz finds its way to Metro's 450.9125 MHz repeater. Traffic aircraft, however, still

exchange navigational information on 122.75 MHz. In addition, many public safety aircraft often use 122.75 MHz for coordination with area traffic reporters. Contrary to popular belief, none of the local traffic reporters fly helicopters, all fly variations of the Cessna 172. The 172 is a popular aircraft for traffic reports due to it's fuel economy, dependability, and other reasons.

callsign	aircraft
049	Metro Traffic Plane (WMAL)
18H	Metro Traffic Plane
44E	WTOP Plane (no longer in service)
588	Metro Traffic Plane (spare, now in Balti.?)
5QS	Metro Traffic Plane
83E	Metro Traffic Plane
947	WLTT Plane
Condor	Metropolitan PD Helicopters
Eagle	US Park PD Helicopters
Fairfax	Fairfax County PD Helicopters
MC10	Montgomery Co. DOT Plane
Trooper	Maryland State PD Helicopters

MC10, the Montgomery County DOT Cessna 172XP is the only truly dedicated traffic aircraft operated by a local government in the Metropolitan area. MC10 has both county fire and police radios but primarily uses 453.4 MHz with the county traffic center. "Fairfax" passes traffic information to the county EOC via 460.125 and 854.1375 MHz. "Condor" (identifies as "Juno" on MPD radio) passes information to their dispatcher over 460.325 MHz.

WLTT 94.7FM - Walt Starling

450.7000s Airborne Traffic Remotes
856-860.6375 Leased Trunked (WNHZ909)

WLTT is currently home for veteran traffic reporter Walt Starling. Before working at WLTT, Starling reported for WAVA (on 166.25 MHz), WASH (on 450.25 MHz) and WPGC (on 450.7 MHz). Starling has a trunked radio provided by Maryland Communications which permits him to contact the studio and others using the telephone interconnect feature. Starling's plane still has capability of all 161 MHz frequencies (including 166.25 MHz) which he used while at WPGC. These frequencies are rarely used. Starling's 450.7 MHz transmitter, a wide-band Marti, often comes in better on some scanners on 450.6875 MHz than on 450.7 MHz.

WMAL 630AM - Andy Parks

161.7000s Airborne Remotes (KUR811)
455.2125s News Reporters & Remotes (KKN764)

Besides receiving information from Metro Traffic Control on 450.9125 MHz, Parks receives traffic information from REACT Unit 63 via 161.7 MHz. Unit 63 obtains information from the NCRI repeaters (462.675 MHz in the metro area and 462.6 MHz in Northern Virginia), CB Channel 9 and telephone reports. Upon rare occasions, Parks uses the WMAL station reporter frequency (455.2125 MHz) should 161.7 MHz be unavailable.

WMZQ 98.7FM - Jim Russ & Mark Megicine
WMZQ 1390AM - " " " " " " " "
450.2625s Airborne Traffic Remotes CH2

Russ and Megicine designate the 450.9125 MHz repeater as Channel 1.

WPGC 95.5FM - Tom Fanning

161.6400s	F1	KPG713	Remotes & ENG (primary)
161.6700s	F2	KPG713	Alternate (rarely used)
161.7000s	F3	KPG713	
161.7300s	F4	KPG713	ENG (rarely used)
161.7600s	F5	KPG713	ENG (rarely used)
455.8000s		KFX938	Airborne Traffic Remotes

ENG is Electronic News Gathering. While working at WPGC Starling reported on 450.7 MHz. He took the frequency with him to WLTT. Fanning reports traffic for WPGC using 455.8 MHz (for remotes) and 161.64 MHz (for two-way with the studio). Typically the studio talks to Fanning on 161.64 MHz and he responds to them on 455.8 MHz. Fanning designates 455.8 MHz as Channel 4. Starling still has a 161 MHz radio with a similar configuration as the one listed above.

WTOP 1500AM - Bob Marbourg & John Hedler

450.350s A-5 News Reporters,"Two-Way Ch" (KQS282)
455.650s D-5 Traffic Comms. & Remote (KA88515)

"A-5" and "D-4" designate input positions found on the WTOP studio's audio switcher and not actual radio channel numbers. Because channel configurations vary depending upon the radio, reporters typically refer to the frequencies using the "A-5" or "D-4" designations. The WTOP studio does not transmit on 455.65 MHz, the "traffic frequency". Reporters use it exclusively for unit to unit conversations and remotes.

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BALTIMORE

Changes in Baltimore traffic reporting occur at an even faster rate than they do in Washington. Keeping tabs on the almost constant changes can frustrate nearly any scanner buff. What information I've compiled from my location is listed below. Any future updates would be appreciated.

Metro Traffic Control - Baltimore Bureau
450.4875ro 455.4875ri Two-Way & Remotes (KPF313)

Metro Traffic provides reporters to WCBM, WGRX and WQSR. Unlike the Washington market, Baltimore has a second syndicated traffic service. While different than Metro Traffic in many ways, Chuck Whittaker's Traffic Watch provides stations with an alternate traffic service.

During 1990 Chuck Whittaker's Traffic Team went airborne and provided syndicated traffic reports to subscribers for several months. The Traffic Team provided remotes to several stations including WCBM-AM, WJZ-TV, WYST-AM and WYST-FM using 450.2875, 450.75 and 450.8 MHz. The airborne reports then stopped, leaving scanner listeners wondering what happened.

Unlike Washington, traffic aircraft in Baltimore rarely use the aircraft frequencies to exchange information. When they do, however, 123.05, 123.45 and 123.475 MHz make likely candidates for such communication. Aircraft identifications include: WBAL (N93873 and 93874), former WBSB (1NW) and WWMX (684). Baltimore City Police Helicopters identify themselves as "Foxtrot." Stations employing airborne traffic reporters include the following:

WBAL 1090AM - Dave Sandler
WIYY 97.9FM - " " " "
450.3625r News Reporters, Traffic Two-Way (KEH561)
455.2875s Back-Up for 455.6125 (not noted in use)
455.6125s Airborne Traffic Remotes

WCBM 680AM - Captain Jack
450.8000s Airborne Traffic Remotes

WGRX 100.7FM - Captain Jack
455.5625s Airborne Traffic Remotes

Prior to using 455.5625 MHz, WGRX received its traffic remotes over 161.76 MHz.

WQSR 105.7FM
450.7000s Traffic Team Airborne Remotes
450.7500s Traffic Team Airborne Remotes
450.8000s Traffic Team Airborne Remotes CH4
450.8500s Traffic Team Airborne Remotes (primary)

WWMX 106.5FM - Duke Brooks
450.0875s Airborne Remotes & Two-Way (KPJ399)

Pilot Duke Brooks of the Mix Traffic Copter usually records his remotes. While not directly affiliated with Metro Traffic Control, Brooks occasionally speaks to Metro Traffic Control on their 450.4875 MHz repeater.

Over the years numerous traffic aircraft have reported for Baltimore area radio stations. These stations include WBSB, WFBR, WPOC, WYST, among others.

Try monitoring the traffic aircraft frequencies the next time you commute. If the frequencies don't help you avoid the delays, they should at least provide you with some entertainment.

ODDS & ENDS

More PG Updates...

John Scott writes to inform us about the new Prince George's County Police frequencies. As you might recall, the FCC issued two former Anne Arundel County frequencies to Prince George's County after Anne Arundel switched to 800 MHz. The two new frequencies are tentatively designated as Police Channels 9 and 10 (494.3125 and 495.2125 MHz respectively). They remain unused by the county police.

Currently 494.3125 MHz repeats the mobile side of 495.0125 MHz - probably in an attempt to prevent listeners from thinking the frequency is inactive. John says 495.2125 MHz is due to go on the air in a similar way in the near future. A friend of John's installed the new transmitter in January. John reminds us that Prince George's County school buses now operate on 155.22 MHz. Thanks John for the updates and for the Hamfest calendar!

Besides the two new frequencies, Prince George's County Police plan additional radio changes as well. Corporal Frank Carson notes that the "Edward" sector, which currently operates on Channel 2 (494.5375 MHz) with the "Charlie" and "David" sectors, plans to switch its operations to Channel 5 (494.5625 MHz) with the "Frank" sector. If things go as planned, the "Edward" sector, which patrols the Bowie area, will make the switch in a few weeks. We congratulate Frank on his recent promotion and thank him for his continued support.

Metro Buses Get New Radios...

Brent Baker, who thoughtfully keeps us abreast of local news stories of interest to local scanner buffs, sends us two new articles. Metro officials, according to the Washington Times, plan to spend over $8 million to update radios on all Metro buses with a new computerized communication system utilizing microwave transmitters. The 17 year old system currently in use by the WMATA buses operates correctly only 40 percent to 60 percent of the time.

Besides supporting regular voice communication, the new radio system will transmit data on daily revenue and passenger counts. WMATA chose this state-of-the-art radio system over a less expensive cellular network because authorities consider cellular less reliable during emergencies. WMATA plans to install the new radios on 1,650 buses over a three-year period.

VDOT Expands Emergency Vehicle Patrols...

The second clipping Brent sends, also from the Times, talks about the emergency road patrols operating on seven different routes across Northern Virginia. Motorists, will be delighted when they find additional trucks to provide assistance on the road in coming weeks. The Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) bright orange pick-up trucks identify using designations in the 400 series on the VSP frequencies. Besides VSP radios, these trucks possess cellular telephones, CBs and VDOT radios. If anyone desires copies of either article, kindly send me (Alan) a SASE. Thanks Brent for your continued support.

Free DC Wall Maps...

The DC Committee to Promote Washington distributes free District of Columbia wall maps. If you can't afford an ADC map book, this map makes a good substitute. Call the DC Committee to Promote Washington at 202-724-4091. Be persistent though, as it took me three phone calls before I got mine!

Hell's Angels to Perform at Andrews...

Roger West writes to remind us that the US Navy Blue Angels plan to perform at the annual Andrews Air Force Base open house on May 22 and 23. Call the open house tape recording (301-568-5995) for details.

AH

Montgomery Co. Fire To Replace MODATs....

Montgomery Co. Fire is reported to be planning to replace their current MODAT system. They also may add new high speed data capabilities for the M.C. Police to do license and warant checks. The new system is said to be Morse code based and was chosen after an evaluation of several systems. It's benefits include universal access from any radio, high noise immunity, and quick system response. Mobile radios will be outfitted with a knee operated Morse code key.
Sam Morse

READY FOR THE APRIL 4 WUSA TOUR?

After careful planning, I am pleased to announce that Dave Statter, one of Washington's most dedicated reporters, has scheduled a tour for us of WUSA's new Broadcast House.

WUSA officially opened its new home on December 17. A month later, WUSA put the new state-of-the-art facility on the air. Highlights of the new Broadcast House include separate news and programming control rooms and production studios, robotic cameras, a computer controlled lighting system and a news set with six environments for the five hours of Channel 9 News broadcast throughout the day.

Rees Associates, an Oklahoma architectural firm, designed the facility. The Donohoe Companies constructed it. Deupi & Associates designed the interior.

You'll find the new Broadcast House at 4100 Wisconsin Avenue, NW - between Van Ness and Upton Streets. It is about half a mile south of the Tenleytown Metro station. There is side-street and meter parking nearby. In the event that you can't find a spot, park at the large commercial parking garage at 4000 Wisconsin (entrance on Upton Street). If you plan to park on the street, make certain to bring plenty of change (meters take quarters only).

Meet us in the lobby at 1 p.m.

Please give Alan a call at 301-270-2531 if you plan to attend so he has an idea of how many people to expect. Hope to see you all there!
AH

Found: *Police Call left at the Febuary CHM meeting. Contact Mike Peyton to identify and reclaim.*

DATES TO REMEMBER

Date	Location	Contact
Sat, Apr 4 1:00pm	**WUSA-TV9 Tour 4100 Wisconsin Av, NW**	**Alan 301-270-2531**
Sun, Apr 26	Carroll County Hamfest Westminster, MD	
Apr 24-26	Dayton Hamvention Dayton, Ohio	DARA 513-454-1456
Sat, May 16 1 to 4	**Hyattsville Library Gathering 6530 Adelphi Rd**	**Alan 301-270-2531**
May 22 & 23	Annual Open House Andrews Air Force Base	AAFB Recording 301-568-5995
Sun, May 24	Maryland FM Assoc Hamfest Howard County Fairgrounds	

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Cecil Riley, Acting Treasurer

Published on a monthly basis, the Capitol Hill Monitor keeps scanner enthusiasts informed of local meetings, frequency profiles and other topics of interest to area scanner listeners. Subscriptions through December, 1992 cost $8. **Make checks payable to Cecil Riley** and submit them to him at the following address:

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Please address all correspondence (with the exception of subscription inquires) to Alan. We welcome frequency and visitor requests, but kindly include a SASE.

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Meeting Coordinators:

Ken Fowler, Virginia Coordinator (703-385-2165)
Mike Peyton, Maryland Coordinator (703-749-7381)

Computer Bulletin Boards:

We encourage computer users to log onto Jack Anderson's Frequency Forum computer BBS at 703-207-9622 (8-N-1). Frequency Forum is the official electronic gathering place for readers of **the Capitol Hill Monitor**.

LAST ISSUE!

If there is no date next to your name, this is the last complimentory issue you will recieve. To continue recieving CHM and become a member, contact Cecil Riley (see page 5)

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